

# **Southern California Association of Governments**

## **LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) PLAN**

The Southern California Association of Governments is required to take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services, and information regarding our programs and activities to individuals who are Limited English Proficient (LEP). SCAG consulted the USDOT's LEP Guidance and performed a four factor analysis of our contact with the public to determine the appropriate mix of LEP services to offer.

### **Four Factor Analysis**

#### **1) The nature and importance of service provided by SCAG**

SCAG is the nation's largest metropolitan planning organization (MPO), representing six counties, 191 cities and more than 18 million residents. SCAG undertakes a variety of planning and policy initiatives to encourage a more sustainable Southern California now and in the future.

To that end, SCAG assists with regional transportation and land use planning. Under federal and state mandates, SCAG is tasked with developing a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and a Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) every four years. Recently with the passage of California's SB 375 into state law, SCAG has also been given the added responsibility of developing a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) to address greenhouse gas emissions as an element of the RTP.

As MPO, SCAG is responsible for preparing plans and programs that are developed in consultation with all interested parties and provide reasonable opportunities for interested parties to comment.

#### **2) The number or proportion of LEP persons in the service area.**

Data was gathered from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), 2005-2009 Data Set for "Language Spoken at Home by Ability to speak English for the Populations 5 Years and Older," to identify information on persons who speak languages other than English at home and who speak English less than "very well" and would be classified as limited English proficient or "LEP."

A review of the ACS data concludes that for the SCAG region there were 3,866,261 persons who are LEP, or 23.6% of the total population 16,394,541 (which represents people 5 years or older). Of this number of LEP persons, 2,839,564 (or 73%) are Spanish speakers and represent the highest percentage of individuals who spoke English less than "very well" at home. The total Spanish speaking population was 35.6% of the SCAG total population. In addition, 230,974 speakers (6%) of the Chinese language, 162,763 speakers (4.2%) of the Korean language, 144,941 speakers (3.7%) of the Vietnamese language, 95,556 speakers (2.5%) of the Tagalog language, and 76,739 speakers (2%) of the Armenian language, speak English less than "very well" at home and comprise the next largest groups of LEP individuals in the SCAG region after Spanish speakers.

Information from the 2000 Census can also be used as a second estimate of the number or proportion of LEP persons in the SCAG region. This information shows that 2,767,426 Spanish speakers also speak English either "well", "not well", or "not at all." In addition, 234,751 speakers of other Indo-European Languages, 706,603 speakers of Asian-Pacific Island

Languages, and 44,050 speakers of other languages speak English in a category other than “very well.” The total number of persons in the SCAG region who reported to the 2000 Census that they speak English in a category other than “very well” is, 3,752,830 or 24.6% of the total population of persons 5 years and older.

### **3) The frequency with which LEP individuals come into contact with the service.**

Since the 2008 RTP, SCAG has focused on ways to enhance participation within LEP communities. In addition to the traditional methods of offering translation services, SCAG has done the following:

- Working on incorporating a web based translation tool for the SCAG website, which would translate web content into a variety of different languages including Spanish and Chinese.
- Additionally, for the 2012 RTP cycle, SCAG has secured outreach services through Lee Andrews Group, a firm with comprehensive lists and contacts in minority and LEP communities, to assist with translation services and targeted outreach.
- Created an interactive Regional Transportation Plan (iRTP) online, which allows for full access and the ability to comment directly on the draft Plan.

### **4) The resources available to the recipient of the federal funds to assure meaningful access to the service by LEP persons**

SCAG currently provides some materials in Spanish such as factsheets and web content. SCAG also has several experienced staff members who are fluent in both Spanish and various Asian languages. About \$22,095 per year is allocated in 2012 for additional language services provided by outside consultants. This amount is in addition to the staff time and materials developed for outreach to LEP communities.

### **Implementation Plan:**

SCAG recognizes the need to continue providing language services throughout the region. A review of SCAG relevant programs, activities and services that are currently offered include:

- Spanish speaking translators available upon request for meetings and workshops.
- Selected RTP materials available in English, Spanish, Chinese and Korean languages.
- RTP Executive Summary available in Spanish, Chinese and Korean languages on the SCAG website.
- Utilization of a specialty outreach consultant to engage with the LEP and minority communities for the 2012 RTP cycle

SCAG in conjunction with our consultant will contact the community organizations that serve LEP persons, as well LEP persons themselves, and perform a four factor analysis every four years to identify what, if any, additional information or activities might better improve our communication to their communities. From this information, SCAG will evaluate the projected financial and personnel needed to provide the requested services and assess which elements can be provided cost-effectively.